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A review of rabies surveillance and response activities in Lao PDR to 2011

A. Kamsing[1,*], P. Nasipaseuth[2], S. Archkhawong[3], K. Southalack[4], W. Theppangna[5], B. Khamphaphongphane[6], K. Phounphenghaek[7], B. Kounnavong[8], M. Phengxay[9], F. Dusan[9]

[1] *Lao Field Epidemiology Training, Vientiane Capital, Lao, People's Democratic Republic of*
[2] *Lao Field Epidemiology Training, Vienitiane Capital, Lao, People's Democratic Republic of*
[3] *Vientiane Capital, Lao, People's Democratic Republic of*
[4] *National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology, Vientiane Capital, Lao, People's Democratic Republic of*
[5] *National Animal Health Center, Vientiane Capital, Lao, People's Democratic Republic of*
[6] *National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology, Vientiane Capital, Lao, People's Democratic Republic of*
[7] *National Immunization Program, Vientiane Capital, Lao, People's Democratic Republic of*
[8] *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, GA, USA*
[9] *World Health Organization, Vientiane Capital, Lao, People's Democratic Republic of*

Background: Rabies, a viral zoonoses endemic to Lao PDR, causes acute encephalitis with almost 100% case fatality if no post-exposure treatment (PET) is provided. While testing commenced at the Lao National Animal Health Centre in 1954, it was in 1999 a National Committee for Rabies Control was formed. ASEAN's "call for action towards the elimination of Rabies. . .by 2020", makes it appropriate to review Lao PDR's rabies surveillance and response activities up to 2011.

Methods: Retrospective studies of 10 years of dog bite and vaccination data reported by health facilities to the National Immunization Programme (2002-2011), 19 years (1993-2011) of dog vaccination data and 5 years (2006-2011) of rabies laboratory results from the National Animal Health Centre (2006-2011) were undertaken. Additionally, two cross sectional surveys were conducted; one targeting provincial epidemiologists and immunisation programme staff nation-wide and another one targeting veterinary workers in public and private clinics of Vientiane Capital. Data was analysed using EpiINFO and excel.

Results: Vientiane Capital accounts for 73% of the national data for bites and rabies vaccination in humans with a reduction in provinces reporting over the last 5 years. An average of 8,528 dog bites are reported annually with 99% given PET consisting of vaccination (since 2000 purchased by Provincial and District Health Offices) and wound care. Only 30% receive a full course (5) of vaccinations. Immunoglobulin is not available in Lao PDR. The percent of suspected dog samples testing positive for rabies increased from 48% in 2006 to 64% in 2011 with 74% submitted from Vientiane Capital. 71-83% of dog vaccinations occur in the Capital, covering 6% of the estimated dog population.

Conclusion: There are many challenges to effective rabies surveillance and response in Laos but self-sustainability of commercial vaccine delivery for humans is evident. Dog rabies vaccination programmes would require resources that are not currently available. Practical steps in the meantime include: strengthened cooperation and coordination to improve current systems for collection and sharing of rabies information, immunoglobulin availability, strengthening of dog regulations, promotion of rabies awareness and ongoing development of veterinary capacity.

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An epidemiological survey of brucellosis in Azna County, Luristan Province, Western Iran

H. Kassiri[1,*], H. Amani[2], M. Lotfi[3], S. Hosseini[3]

[1] *Ahwaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences, School of Health, Ahwaz, Iran, Islamic Republic of*
[2] *Azna Health Services Centre, Azna, Iran, Islamic Republic of*
[3] *Ahwaz Jundishapur University of Medical Sciences, Ahwaz, Iran, Islamic Republic of*

Background: Brucellosis is one of the most common infectious diseases in some areas of Iran. It is a matter of problem in endemic areas, since it involves not only humans and animals but also causes socioeconomic problems. This study is designed to study the epidemiology of brucellosis in the rural and urban population of Azna, and applying the results to planning for controlling the disease in the area.

Methods: The study is descriptive, cross–sectional, conducted all people identified having brucellosis - based on lab results. Totally 41 brucellosis patients referred to health centers of Azna county during 2007 – 2008 were studied according to epidemiological, demographic, laboratory and treatment protocols aspects.

Results: Forty one subjects were found to be positive to brucellosis in laboratory tests. Incidence rate was calculated 56.65 in 100.000 populations. About 68.3% of patients were female and 31.7% male. Around 95.2% of subjects were living in rural and 4.8% in urban area. 46.3% of patients had history of animal contact. The most common transmission was through dairy products (53.7%). The most contagious seasons were spring (39%) and summer (31.7%). Disease was more common among farmers (29.3%)and housewives (24.4%).

Conclusion: Due to the high contamination rate of this disease and its economical consequences on individuals and on society, steps can be taken to prevent its prevalence by good supervision on supplying and distribution of dairy products, animal vaccination, public instruction and alarming.

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